

PREFACE

“संगच्छध्वं संवदध्वंसं वो मनांसि जानताम्”

Quoting words from the *Rigveda* which mean, “May we move in harmony, speak in one voice; let our minds be in agreement”, I am to believe that the *shloka* deep down propagates the idea of inclusive development and its significance for any nation. For a country where around 70% of the population resides in approximately 7,00,000 villages, India can very aptly be referred to as ‘a land of villages’. That said and done, the development of the economy or achievement of the goal of nation building is next to impossible if the villages or the *grams* of the country are to be sidelined.

Believing the fact and being fully aware of the role played by the presence of good governance practices in the holistic growth and development of the nation, ICSI has approached the villages of the country with a unique and innovative point of view.

The 73rd Amendment to the Constitution in the year 1992 brought about a decentralisation in the governance structure of the country laying the foundation for the *Panchayati Raj* System. The sole purpose of this Amendment was to provide constitutional sanction to establish democracy at the grassroots level as it exists at the state level or national level. Mentioning development at the grass-root level, it would seem apt to refer to an age-old proverb which reads “A tree with strong roots laughs at storms”. At ICSI, we firmly believe that if good governance is meant to make a nation strong and the villages form the roots of the Indian mainland, then

it would be pertinent to be steered by this proverb and efforts be made to guide the villages or grassroots of the nation towards all-inclusive growth and development.

Considering the current roles and responsibilities of the Village *Panchayats*, one can easily understand the significance of governance in this segment of the society. Being local units of self-government, *Panchayats* as managed by their functionaries work towards economic development and ensuring social justice in their area. And to play the role envisaged for them, including carrying out various functions of the likes of planning & budgeting, management of office and accounts, implementation and supervision of projects, holding of *Gram Sabhas*, grievance redressal, etc.; these elected representatives are required to walk an extra mile in making these processes a success.

The *Model Governance Code for Meetings of Gram Panchayats* is ICSI's social initiative to facilitate the implementation of standard practices in convening the meeting of *Panchayats*. Though voluntary in nature, this Code is intended to sensitize the elected representatives of the panchayats regarding their roles and responsibilities, bring about awareness and more so be the guiding light as to how good governance can be inculcated at the last leg of the democratic structure of the country.

Largely guided by the ultimate guiding principle of 'Antyodaya' which means "rise of the last person", this initiative of ICSI is intended to emphasize upon effective decision making at the meetings of Gram Panchayats and to bring this section of the nation at par with the mainstream governance structure of the country.

I acknowledge the efforts of CS Pavan Kumar Vijay, Past President, ICSI, CS Ranjeet Pandey, Central Council Member, ICSI, CS Banu Dandona, Joint Director, CS

Anamika Chaudhary, Deputy Director and CS Rakesh Kumar,
Executive (Academics) in preparing the manuscript of this
Model Governance Code for Meetings of Gram Panchayats.

Improvement is a continuous process and equally applicable
to this Model Governance Code. I would personally be
grateful to users and readers to offer their suggestions/
comments for further refinement of this Model Governance
Code.

Place: New Delhi

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President

The Institute of Company Secretaries of India